

# Norwood PCBs

November 2003

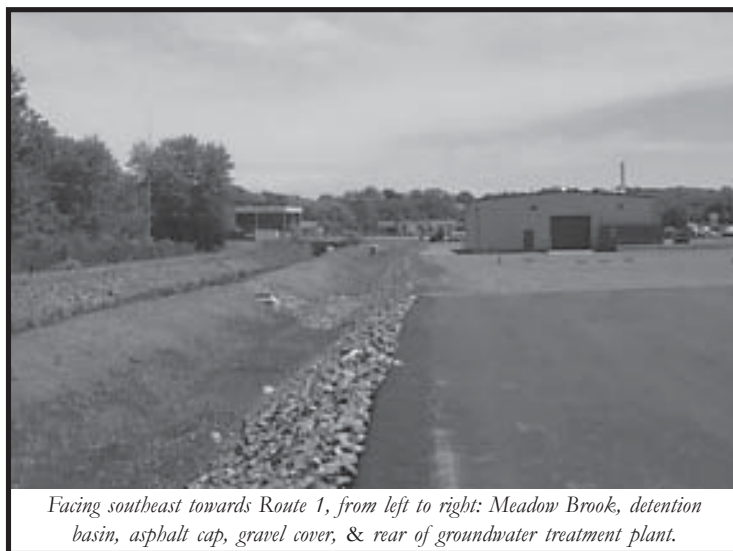


## Superfund Site Activity Update

### What is happening at the Norwood PCBs Superfund Site?

#### Cleanup Status

By August 1998 over 20,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated soil and sediment were excavated and consolidated under an asphalt cap and gravel cover areas. The asphalt cap area has been used for vehicle storage since 1998. After four years of active groundwater treatment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suspended treatment activities in June 2000 based on: 1. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (MADEP) reclassification of the site's groundwater from drinking water to non-drinking water; and 2. additional site-specific risk-assessment activities. The state's reclassification and the risk-assessment efforts resulted in proposed new site cleanup standards. Current groundwater contamination levels are well below these new standards for all contaminants but PCBs. PCB groundwater levels remain slightly elevated. EPA continues to collect groundwater samples to ensure that contamination levels remain below the proposed new standards and will adopt the proposed standards in 2004. Additional activities are underway to investigate the elevated groundwater PCB levels which may be related to the detection of extremely low PCB levels in surface water. These activities will be used to determine whether further cleanup is needed for the site's groundwater.



*Facing southeast towards Route 1, from left to right: Meadow Brook, detention basin, asphalt cap, gravel cover, & rear of groundwater treatment plant.*

other electrical components. The health effects from PCBs may include liver and immune system damage; neurological, developmental, and reproductive effects; and cancer.

People are at risk when coming into direct contact with or accidentally eating contaminated soil or sedi-

ment at the site. Breathing airborne PCBs poses much lower health risks than touching or eating PCB-contaminated soils or sediments. This risk can happen only after breathing HIGH airborne levels of PCBs for a LONG time.

For more PCB information go to <http://www.epa.gov/pcb>

#### Potential Site Redevelopment

EPA works to cleanup the country's most hazardous waste sites in order to protect human health and the environment. EPA also strives to return sites to productive use by implementing Superfund cleanup plans that are consistent with the anticipated future use of the sites. To ensure the protection of human health and the environment, certain limitations or requirements on potential redevelopment may be put into place by EPA.

At the Norwood PCBs Superfund site, the potential for reuse was a factor in EPA's decision to amend its original cleanup plan. To protect human health

#### What are PCBs?

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls are man-made, odorless, and colorless chemicals that were used at the site since the 1940s in the production of electrical transformers and

and the environment, rules were established with the property owner to ensure that contaminated materials would be handled properly. Such rules would also apply to any developer, tenant or operator. Not adhering to such rules would result in significant fines and other legal penalties.

The site's current restrictions include:

- no day care use;
- no groundwater use;
- no interfering with or disrupting cap and cover areas containing the contaminated materials unless certain requirements are met.

Any reuse plans that would interfere or disrupt cap and cover areas containing the contaminated soil and sediment are required to have a health and safety plan that meets state and federal laws and regulations. Additionally, EPA and MADEP would need to approve a workplan prepared by a Massachusetts Licensed Site Professional. Such a workplan would describe the disturbance and include plans describing safe work practices; air monitoring procedures; and how cap and cover areas would be restored in accordance with the site's cleanup standards.

Currently EPA and MADEP are reviewing a proposed redevelopment plan calling for the construction of a Lowe's Home Improvement Store over existing cap and cover areas and groundwater contamination. Any disturbance of these areas would necessitate appropriate health and safety monitoring activities during construction. In addition, building design features would need to address potential indoor air vapors coming from contaminated groundwater. Because the primary concern during the excavation of cap and cover areas would be airborne PCB-contaminated dust, EPA and MADEP would require air monitoring as well as activities to keep dust levels down. Redevelopment projects of this scope require not only initial regulatory approval, but direct supervision as well.

## Cleanup History

- 1986** □  
*June* □ Site listed on EPA's National Priorities List of Superfund Sites.
- 1989** □  
*Sept.* □ EPA's cleanup plan issued.
- 1996** □  
*Mar.* □ EPA begins groundwater treatment.  
*May* □ EPA revises cleanup plan.  
*Aug.* □ EPA negotiates agreement requiring Settling Defendants to perform certain cleanup activities.  
*Oct.* □ Grant Gear building demolition activities begin and were completed in February 1997 by Settling Defendants.
- 1997** □  
*Apr.* □ Soil/sediment excavation and cap/cover cleanup activities begin and were completed in August 1998 by Settling Defendants.  
*July* Site purchased.  
*Sept.* □ EPA negotiates reuse rules with new property owner.  
*Oct.* □ EPA Meadow Brook restoration activities begin and were completed in July 1999.
- 2000** □  
*Jun.* □ EPA suspends groundwater treatment pending MADEP revised groundwater classification and new risk assessment result.
- 2001** □  
*May* □ MADEP revises groundwater classification.
- 2001-2003** □ EPA conducts additional studies to support revised groundwater cleanup levels.
- 2004** □ EPA plans to revise groundwater cleanup levels due to the revised groundwater classification and additional study results.

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